



# Submission

Regulatory Standards Bill  
2025

## About PPTA Te Wehengarua

PPTA Te Wehengarua represents the majority of teachers engaged in secondary education in New Zealand, including secondary teachers, principals, and manual and technology teachers.

Under our constitution, all PPTA Te Wehengarua activity is guided by the following objectives:

- to advance the cause of education generally and of all phases of secondary and technical education in particular;
- to uphold and maintain the just claims of its members individually and collectively; and
- to affirm and advance Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

This submission is from the PPTA Te Wehengarua Executive and is on behalf of all of our members.

## ***PPTA Te Wehengarua strongly opposes the Regulatory Standards Bill (RSB) and urges the Select Committee to recommend that this bill be abandoned.***

This bill seeks to establish a set of ‘principles’, focused on property rights and the rights of individuals and corporations, that most laws and regulations would be expected to follow. It would constrain governments from acting in ways that conflict with those principles, even where the public good would justify it. Furthermore, it would lock in these constraints for future governments, making it difficult to reverse them without compensating corporate interests. PPTA Te Wehengarua opposes the RSB for the reasons outlined below.

### **1. The Regulatory Standards Bill is fundamentally opposed to the values and objectives of the PPTA Te Wehengarua.**

Teachers enter the profession because they believe in education as a public good that creates communities and offers opportunities to all students in Aotearoa New Zealand. Education is the means by which all other professions and industries are grown, and it is in the interests of all that it is governed by laws that intend to keep education as well resourced, inclusive and wide reaching as possible. The RSB seeks to prioritise the interests of businesses and the profits of individuals over the public good. Public services such as education will be negatively impacted by this reprioritisation to the detriment of the sector and society more widely. We must not prioritise short-term profits for corporations and individuals over the long-term well-being of all New Zealanders.

The RSB is also an attack on the rights of Māori and the Crown’s obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The proposed bill could remove Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the common law Treaty principles from our law-making processes and the delivery of public services. This would remove the legal impact of Te Tiriti and its principles from the interpretation of our laws. The RSB fails to protect Treaty rights and collective ownership of resources like whenua and wai. It does not recognise rights guaranteed to Māori such as rangatiratanga and the exercise of kaitiakitanga. It risks undermining Māori tino rangatiratanga and ignores the role of regulation in protecting shared resources. PPTA Te Wehengarua has a constitutional objective to affirm and advance Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and as such strongly opposes any legislation that contradicts this objective.

**2. PPTA Te Wehengarua rejects the portrayal of the RSB as a vehicle for “good” law making, economic efficiency, and as a way to improve regulation and productivity in New Zealand.**

The RSB prioritises the corporate and property rights and interests over the rights of workers and communities. PPTA Te Wehengarua does not believe this is “good” law making, nor will it improve productivity. Rather, it will increase the ease of doing business at the expense of worker safety, the environment, te Tiriti o Waitangi and public services such as education.

**3. The RSB has the potential to restrict taxes, fees, and levies, thereby reducing the government’s ability to raise revenue for essential services like education.**

A strong, well-resourced public education system ultimately means a stronger economy and stronger communities. Schools sit at the heart of their communities and are vital in ensuring the academic, social, and emotional success of our students. Any restriction on the government’s ability to raise revenue for education is of huge concern. It means larger class sizes, worse facilities, fewer opportunities, and overall declining engagement and achievement for students. It means longer hours, potentially dangerous working conditions, and less job satisfaction for teachers.

Schools are already facing subsequent budgets in which the operations grants funding increases do not meet inflation, meaning that in real terms they are being asked to provide quality education with fewer and fewer resources. It is imperative that we do not add to any further barriers to the government’s ability to raise revenue for essential public services such as education.

**4. PPTA Te Wehengarua objects to the attack on democracy inherent in the formation of a Regulatory Standards Board and the powers being given to the Minister for Regulation.**

The RSB proposes the formation of a Regulatory Standards Board of un-elected officials. The bill allows any person or corporation to challenge laws or regulations they believe breach these principles, via a Regulatory Standards Board, which would only consider the Bill’s principles, not broader impacts. PPTA Te Wehengarua believes this opens the door for corporations and wealthy lobbyists to pressure government. The balancing of interests should remain with elected representatives in order to avoid a shift in power toward those with the greatest legal and financial resources. Aotearoa must remain a country in which we are able to act collectively for the common good.

The Minister for Regulation will be empowered to call for investigations, issue guidelines on interpretation of the principles and assess the performance of the regulatory system. They will also be empowered to request information from government departments, councils, the Reserve Bank and third-party providers with failure to comply being a contempt of court. This amounts to an enormous amount of power placed in the hands of one individual, and circumvents the regulatory powers of parliament as a whole.

The Bill would sharply limit how governments make decisions in the public interest. Future governments could find themselves unable to respond flexibly to new challenges or community needs.

**5. The RSB would strip away many of the protections that help keep New Zealanders safe, healthy, and supported – including in areas like education, workplace safety, and fair working conditions.**

Teachers are workers who encounter a wide range of complex and challenging situations every day. They teach in diverse places and spaces that come with ever changing conditions. They and their students deserve to be safe at all times and in all places.

The Bill assumes less regulation is better regulation. This could lead to sweeping cuts in standards that currently protect people and the environment. Health and safety regulations must be evaluated through the values of human life and dignity, not through cost to an employer or business. Stripping away these protections in the name of productivity and efficiency places teachers and students in harm's way.

**6. PPTA Te Wehengarua objects to the “takings clause” that could make rate-payers and taxpayers liable to corporations if regulations affect their property rights.**

The RSB would allow corporations and wealthy individuals to challenge laws designed to protect the public good, society, the environment, or Te Tiriti o Waitangi simply because those laws might reduce their profits. Everyday New Zealanders would have no equivalent say.

When considering how to best resource the education sector, we want the government to be considering how to provide the highest quality education in the most equitable way possible. We do not want the government's ability to provide education to be in any way constrained by the possibility of reimbursing lost corporate profits.